

beyond normal community standards," and that it is inappropriate for public television "to be a catalyst for the gay rights movement." Fitzgerald called for Wisconsin Public Television to discontinue the program.

WPT, a statewide network of six stations, has said it will stand by the show and will not pull the episode or the series.

Chicago schools accused of bias

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund announced on March 31 that it is suing the Chicago Board of Education—the nation's third largest school system—charging that it discriminates against teacher applicants who have HIV or other disabilities.

The board's policy requiring full disclosure of medical information to be considered for employment is illegal, Lambda said in a complaint filed in district court on behalf of an applicant who was passed over after revealing he is HIV-positive. The suit charges that the policy violates the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, constitutional rights to privacy and equal protection, and a written directive by Chicago Mayor Richard Daley against requiring city employees or applicants to divulge their HIV status.

The plaintiff, whose name is being withheld, was told by the Board of Education in 1995 that his job application was turned down "because of his health."

Skirting the issue of the military's queer ban

Last spring faculty members at Massachusetts Institute of Technology voted not to remove the Reserve Officer Training Corps from campus, but instead to take action to make the program "more inclusive and better aligned with the values and mission of MIT," reports *Academe Today*. MIT's first action under the teacher-approved mandate is to guarantee loans to any ROTC students who may lose their military scholarships for revealing their sexual orientation. The move is an attempt to protect the rights of gay students enrolled in the program, without risking the loss of sizable federal research grants.

Under a federal law enacted in March 1996, schools with anti-ROTC policies stand to lose such grants, as well as federal student aid, making MIT's resolution to modify rather than eliminate ROTC a convenient option likely to catch on elsewhere. In 1995 MIT received \$336 million from the Pentagon for research and development.

In addition to offering supplemental loans to any student whose military scholarship is terminated because of sexual orientation, MIT plans to waive repayment of part of those loans for students who perform full-time public service or teach in elementary or secondary schools following graduation.

High court rejects minister's challenge

A 1992 state law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was upheld in the U.S. Supreme Court on April 1; the court dismissed without comment a New Jersey minister's claim that the law violates his free-speech right to condemn homosexuality as sinful, says The Associated Press.

The law in question includes sexual orientation in a list of personal characteristics protected from denial of housing, jobs or access to public places, and makes it illegal for anyone to aid or coerce another to commit acts of discrimination or to boycott someone who is protected by the law.

The Rev. David B. Cummings sought to overturn the latter part of the law, saying that it prevents "peaceful informational boycotts" and penalizes speech "advancing the viewpoint that sexual conduct should have moral limits."

New Jersey's attorney general said the law addresses speech only when it is accompanied by actions that amount to incitement or are "apt to cause unlawful conduct."

Knowing the problem is half the solution

According to a Los Angeles Police Department report released April 1, queer bars are inspected more often than straight ones.

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that Police Commission Vice President Art Mattox ordered a review of arrest and raid records in response to activist claims that detectives and city Alcohol and Beverage Control agents were targeting the bars and that patrol officers were harassing lesbians and gay men.

The citywide study found that 37 "community-identified gay bars," account for 1.46 percent of all establishments licensed to sell liquor, but were subject to 2.89 percent of all inspections in 1996. The study also showed that in the city's Northeast and North Hollywood areas, where 8 percent of the bars serve a queer crowd, the rates of inspection were 20.4 percent and 14.5 percent, respectively.

Mattox has directed that similar audits be conducted annually and, responding to charges that officers fabricate anonymous complaints as justification for harassment, he ordered that all anonymous complaints against queer bars be recorded.

Still, some members of the sexual minority community are disappointed with the study's shortcomings, saying it does not address intimidation on the streets and disregards the marked difference in the conduct of officers and agents when inspecting queer bars as opposed to straight bars.

N.C. county commission defunds "deviance"

The Mecklenberg, N.C., County Commission on April 1 voted 5-4 to reduce funding of its Arts and Science Council by \$2.5 million. Having failed in its efforts to censor the Charlotte Repertory Theater's production last spring of Tony Kushner's Pulitzer-winning play *Angels in*



America, and unhappy about a current production of John Guare's *Six Degrees of Separation*, the commission passed a resolution withholding financial support from projects that "promote, advocate or endorse behaviors, lifestyles or values that seek to undermine and deviate from the value and societal role of the traditional American family."

Citing the First Amendment's protection of artistic expression, the ACLU stated in a press release that it is considering a legal challenge to the resolution, calling it "the most blatant form of viewpoint discrimination we've seen in a long time."

Compiled by Christopher D. Cuttone

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